

**Special Courts Committee
Judicial Conference of Indiana**

May 12, 2006
Minutes

1. Members present. The following members of the committee were present Kenneth Abbott, Patrick B. Blankenship, Matthew Cox, Glenn Hancock, Russell Sanders, Richard L. Tandy, and Peggy L. Quint Lohorn, Chair.
2. Staff present. Michelle C. Goodman provided the committee with staff assistance.
3. Guests. Judge John Baker, Court of Appeals; Lilia Judson, Executive Director, State Court Administration; Jane Seigel, Executive Director, Indiana Judicial Center; Kris Suthers, Court Analyst, State Court Administration.
4. Approval of Minutes. The Committee approved the minutes as amended from the February 24, 2006 meeting.
5. Traffic, Misdemeanor, Small Claims Benchbook. The Committee reviewed the proposed changes submitted by Judge Blankenship to the proceeding supplemental process outlined on page 40.2. The Committee decided to amend the proposal by adding “voluntarily” before “reappear” in the first line and added “and filed with the court” to the end of the second sentence. The Committee also amended the proposed form to label the signature lines as plaintiff and defendant; to add a place for the defendant’s address; and that the “Court now accepts parties agreement to reappear and it is so ordered” with a signature line for the judge at the bottom of the form.
6. Court structure discussion. The Committee continued its discussion of the Indiana’s court structure. The Committee discussed the need for an extended meeting to conduct a more in-depth discussion on the issues raised and the Committee determined to schedule a retreat on Thursday, July 6 beginning at 10 a.m. Staff will secure a location for this meeting. The Committee also discussed the need to invite additional participants to help with this project. The Committee developed a list of additional participants for the July retreat: Judge Sosin, Marion County Circuit Court; Clerk, Monroe County; County Court Judge from Madison County. Staff was asked to make these contacts. The Committee noted that additional people might be included in the future. The Committee determined that this project contains two tasks: (1) recommendation on the proposal brought by city and town courts, and (2) the overall court structure. The Committee discussed the fact that historically changes to the judicial branch have been enacted in a piece-meal approach rather than as a part of a strategic plan. The Committee decided that the overall goal of this project is to look at streamlining the system to improve efficiency of services provided to citizens. The Committee held a general discussion on various issues that impact this project, such as the impact on personnel and court time, the impact financially on the systems affected, etc. The Committee discussed the possibility of a gradual shift from the current system in order to effectively implement the strategic plan that would be developed. The Committee asked staff to develop some additional graphs to display revenues and expense of the courts to aid in continuing to discuss the financial aspects of this project. The Committee received an overview of cases addressing the trial de novo process in courts with lay judges. The Committee also decided to get additional input on issues that should be discussed from trial judges in their area.

7. 2006 meeting schedule. The following are the meetings for 2006:
Thursday, July 6, 2006 at 10 a.m. (Indianapolis time) Location TBA
Friday, Aug. 11, 2006 at 11 a.m. (Indianapolis time) at the Judicial Center
Friday, Nov. 3, 2006 at 11 a.m. (Indianapolis time) at the Judicial Center

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle C. Goodman